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A Siren of the Stream

Strange Experiences of a Young Diplomatist in the Brocken.

I SUPPOSE most of the tourists of to-day know the Harz mountains intimately, and have journeyed up to the top of the Brocken. Probably there is a branch railway to take passengers there from Harzburg. Probably the Ilsenfels has been utilized for a fashionable bathing establishment. However, when I went there many years ago, we did things in a primitive fashion, and drove all the way up from Harzburg. I was a young diplomatist at the time, attached to the embassy at Berlin. I was strong and full of spirits, well favored, and with more money at my command than I knew how to spend. I found myself one hot August morning at Berlin, working away in my shirt-sleeves, when a note was brought to me from my chief, announcing that if I cared to take a week's holiday I was at liberty to do so. Berlin was a wilderness, the Thiergarten was a waste, and life was unendurable except between six in the evening and nine in the morning. Nothing loath, I ordered some traps to be put up, and wandered away to Brunswick. A week in August is of very little use, except to potter about in the German country. England was too far, and the time to remain there too short; so I spent two days in Brunswick, where I became fired with enthusiasm about Henry the Lion, his relics, and his tomb.

From Brunswick I drifted, as a leaf in a stream, to Harzburg, where the idea suddenly occurred to me that I would drive up the Brocken. I chartered a conveyance and started at ten o'clock in the morning. The drive, I was told, would take me seven hours. The weather was perfect, the way was solitary. The bells on the horses' harness sounded faintly on the drowsy air. My driver rolled about on his box, engaged at the time in profound sleep, a pipe in his mouth, and a sweet-pea behind his ear. Our way lay upward, of course, and by the roadside a delicious stream dashed and foamed over the rocky soil. Several times I followed my driver's example, and slept; at last, impatient, I descended, bidding my kutscher bustle onward, and wait for me a mile or two further on. I heard the heavy carriage lumber away, it disappeared round a corner of the road, and I and the stream were alone.

I walked briskly on, my hands in my pockets, whistling. At the turn of the road I saw something that immediately arrested my attention. A rock, larger than the rest, stood in the center of the stream. The water parted away from it in two lines of foam. Seated upon it, her face turned in profile toward me, was a young woman. Her head was bare, and her hands were bare, and her naked feet were swinging in the water, carelessly flicking the foam from side to side. It was a strange apparition to come upon suddenly in the wilds of the Harz mountains. I approached diffidently. There is a sort of freemasonry among travelers. This strange creature nodded at me when she discovered my presence.

"You can't think how nice it is," she said, looking me in the face, as if she had known me all her life.

Instantly her manner set me at my ease.

"How did you get there?" I asked in the same tone.

"I took off my stockings on the bank, and waded across," she answered.

I stood looking at her, a meager strip of running water between us.

"Take off yours and come, too," she cried, "there is room for two on this rock."

The utter ludicrousness of my position never struck me at the time; then, I felt irresistibly prompted to do as I was told, and in two moments was sitting by her side. The full midday sun fell on her face, but she did not seem to mind. I looked at her, and wondered at her extremely. In appearance she was very youthful. I should have guessed her between 20 and 22. Her face was pale—of a clear pallor; her lips were chiseled, and of the richest carmine color. Her eyes were cat's eyes, fringed with long, dark lashes—eyes like nothing human, bewildering, absorbing, compelling. I caught myself wondering if they shone in the dark. Her hair peeled finely off her low, sensitive brow. It was arranged in delicious disorder, of which one could not make out the beginning nor the end. Added to all this, her gown was of fine texture and delicate taste—the gown of a woman who was fond of good dressing.

And this woman was sitting bareheaded, bare-footed, alone on a rock in the midst of the Harz mountains!

"You are going to the Brocken?" she asked, interrogatively

"Yes; are you?"

She nodded.

"Are you alone?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered, quite tranquilly. "There is my carriage, and there"—as man approached us from the road—"there is my—courier."

There was an inflection—the very slightest—of hesitation as she spoke. The man, who came forward, was short, dark, ill-favored, more like an Italian boatman of a disreputable class than anything else. In his coarse ears hung silver earrings, and on his dark, greasy hand was a silver ring. He approached his mistress with a familiar air that appeared to me most offensive, and spoke to her in Spanish. She answered in the same language, not imperatively, as I had expected, but in a tone that seemed to imply confidence, friendliness. After shrugging his shoulders at her answer, he lounged away, and sat down somewhere in the shadow of the road.

"Do you mean to say you travel alone with this courier?" I said. "Where are you going, and where have you come from?"

"Yes, I travel alone with my courier. I have come from Spain, and I am going somewhere, I don't quite know where. What does it matter? I would like never to know where I was going, nor what the country is, nor the day, nor the month, nor the year. I wish I had never learnt these things. What is the use of classing to-morrows and yesterdays? Isn't it enough that every day is to-day?"

As she said this a look of fatigue came over her face, her lashes fell, and covered, and hid away her peculiar eyes, her bosom heaved feverishly, and her breath came and went hurriedly. Whatever she was, the woman had feelings, and very sensitive ones.

An hour went by. I questioned her, and learned some curious details of her life. Her name was Sylvia, her husband's name Whitworth. He was a merchant, but he failed and deserted her. "I don't think I minded much," she said with her wonderful smile. "He was never true to me. Perhaps he is dead."

Had I been in my sane senses, as I now am, 12 years later, I should have laughed in my sleeve. As it was, I was not in my sane senses, and I fell in love with her. She was traveling, she didn't care where. For the night, at least, she was to stay at the same hotel as myself, at the Brocken. From me she gathered my slight history, my nationality, my appointment at Berlin, my family, my age.

"I suppose," she said frankly, "that some people might wonder at my going about so independently, but I don't care a button what people think. I suppose if I had any inclinations toward wickedness I should be a very wicked person, but you see I have no inclination. I don't look at it from the moral point of view, because I don't believe in morality. I have no creeds, but I don't think it would amuse me the least to be wicked."

Presently she waded ashore. She dried her feet, or rather I dried them for her, on a dainty lace handkerchief. They were very lovely feet. At the contact of her warm, white flesh my fingers trembled. She saw they trembled, and, gently pushing me away, she finished the task herself, and then looked up at me with a smile. She invited me to enter her carriage with her, and I did so. As we got in, the courier muttered something rather savagely, and my charming friend bent her head down and conversed with him eagerly in a tone which sounded conciliatory. A little further on we met my carriage. We stopped, and with a pretty air of command Mrs. Whitworth signified her intention of changing carriages. We got in, and I arranged my rugs about her feet, my cushions at her back. She shut her eyes and went to sleep, while I was watching her. As I watched her, a madness seemed to come over me. I have never in my life experienced anything like it before or since; it was like magnetism. Perhaps it was due to the sultry heat, the utter stillness, the slow progress of the carriage through the most beautiful scenes; or, more likely still, the back-thrown head, the sensitive and fine profile, the parted crimson lips, the regular breathing, the undefined languor of pose, and the peculiar perfume that hung about my companion, that fired my ardent spirit. At last I softly took possession of the hand nearest me. It was warm and pulsating; the very touch of it seemed to bring into life all the feelings that lay dormant in me. I bent forward cautiously; in another moment I should have kissed her parted crimson lips, when suddenly, swiftly, the strange eyes opened, wide and full, as if she had not been sleeping at all.

"Ah," she said, softly, "what were you going to do?"

I, flushing scarlet, was murmuring some excuses, when she interrupted me:

"Never mind. I am not angry. But you were very bold."

I was going to answer, when, in quite a different mood, she inquired the use of a strong black box that lay on the seat opposite us. I replied that it was my dispatch-box, containing my papers, my passport, my valuables in the way of jewelry, and all the money and promissory notes I possessed at the moment. But before I had nearly got through my list my friend's interest had faded, and she was leaning over the carriage looking at the stream—the Ilsenfels, I heard her name it.

By this time we had arrived at the door of the apology for a hotel, which was then the only hostelry on the Brocken. I offered to assist Mrs. Whitworth, but she turned away with her courier, and I occupied myself in having my things stowed away in the room I had engaged over night. It was a tiny apartment, with walls no thicker than paper. In fact, the whole place was like a rambling and ill-built hut. The interior of this cabin was hot and stuffy, so, after inquiring the hour for table d'hotel, I lit my cigar and strolled outside. At some distance on the level hill top, where the hotel was placed, I could see my new friend and her courier walking up and down, engaged in an animated discussion. I turned off short, not wishing them to know I saw them. Infatuated as I was with this stranger, I could not help feeling her position was a peculiar one. Perhaps the romance and the mystery only served to enhance the charm.

At table d'hote I saw no signs of my friend; afterward I went out to look at the sunset. The place was crowded with tourists—English, German, Swiss—all uninteresting to my eyes, so I avoided them. I went round toward the back, and some one pointed out to me the curiosities of the place—where the witches assemble on Walpurgisnacht, the Devil's Well, the Devil's Pulpit. Rough stones of volcanic strata, thrown up years before, strewed the bare and rugged mountain-top. In one place they were heaped about in great masses; among them was a hollow called Schneefels, where, in the winter, the snow is said to be 35 feet deep. Among these barbaric rocks I found Sylvia Whitworth. I asked her how she had dined.

"I dined here," she said, as if her rocky seat had been her boudoir-table. "There were so many people in the hotel, all ugly and all old; and I can't eat when I see ugly sights. My courier brought me my dinner."

The sun was setting in pomp and splendor. From our high point of view we could see all the shimmer and color, and all the varying tints of a glowing August sunset. I pointed it out to my friend; she did not turn her head.

"I don't care for views," she said, gently; "I have seen so many, and I am tired of them."

I looked in her face. Her eyes had caught some strange luster from the beautiful cloud-land of color about us; there was a vague disquiet visible in her manner, a fluttering in her voice. It seemed to me that she was under the mastery of some profound impression.

The warm night crept onward. We were alone, quite alone, under the throbbing summer sky, with the clouds and the heavens around us.

Instinctively, when I spoke, I spoke in a whisper. "How near we are to heaven," I murmured, "in this high place! How far better than heaven it is to be with you, like this."

A soft, warm breeze passed over our faces, and blew a straggling curl of her loosened hair across my lips; her soft, clinging draperies lay close beside me; her presence seemed to grow more and more compelling.

She smiled a slow, langorous smile—a smile that intoxicated and led me on. She laid her hand upon my arm.

"Heaven," she said, in a low, rapt whisper, "Heaven is whatever we like to make for ourselves on earth; when we die we go out—so" (and she pouted her two perfect lips, and blew a sudden short breath). "When I think," she continued, "that life, and life only, is ours, I sometimes wish to do more with my days—crime or good; or wickedness or virtue; it would not matter to me, if I could but enjoy it, whatever it was."

"But," I whispered, awe-struck, "crime is found out, and then comes punishment."

"There are some crimes," she said, "which leave no trace. What trace does a ship leave in the sea five minutes after she has passed over it?"

Just then her surly courier approached. They talked excitedly for a few moments, and then she turned to me:

"This is pleasant! I hear there is no room for me. The last room was given to you. Not a corner left anywhere; and I am to sleep a la belle etoile."

Of course this was impossible. Willingly I gave up my room, and the courier lounged away.

For a few moments we sat silent, when suddenly upon us there sank a darkness as swift and as obscuring as a curtain. It was one of the strange atmospheric changes of the Brocken. In a breathless space it seemed as if the bright night had turned to a rolling, black mist. I groped for Sylvia's hand. I took it—she was not a bit frightened—into my clasp, warm and yielding. I drew her up from her low, rocky seat, and, placing her hand on my arm, I tried to remember my way back to the hotel. I could not see one yard in front of us. A thundering promise of great heat throbbed through the darkened air. I could hear my companion's hurried breathing.

"I wonder if we are all going to be killed?" she said, quietly.

Just then she stumbled over a stone. I threw out my hands to save her, and she fell forward, literally into my arms.

For one moment of madness I held her close in a wild embrace, kissed her perfumed hair, and her eyes, and her soft, wet lips rapturously. The next moment she was lying passive in my arms, and sobbing like a child, while I endeavored, with every excuse and with every prayer I could think of, to reassure her. We found our way at last to the door, and I led her, still shuddering, up to my room; and, imploring her to forgive me, I said good night, and stayed outside while I heard her close the door and lock it. I then repaired to the drawing-room, where an impromptu couch had been prepared for me.

The next morning, when all the tourists turned out to see the sunrise, I could discover her nowhere. I inquired of the host, and learned that Mrs. Whitworth had departed before sunrise, with her carriage and her courier. I went to my empty room and discovered that she had taken my dispatch box, containing all my valuables. I made no inquiries, and told no one of my loss; for she had infatuated me. Was the Spaniard her husband? I do not know.

Many years have passed. I never saw her again.—San Francisco Argonaut.

HOW HE LOST THE BEER.

It Was in the Bottom of the Big Growler But Was Hardly Perceptible.

"I oughtn't to tell it, but the story is too good to keep."

The speaker, says the Philadelphia Inquirer, was a member of the theatrical profession summering in Philadelphia.

"Jim came home the other night," he continued, "hot and thirsty. We sized up our finances and found we each had five cents. I suggested that about the best thing we could do was to go out and get two glasses of beer with the money, then come back and go to bed.

"'I know a better game than that,' replied Jim. 'We don't want to give up our last dime for two glasses when we can take a pitcher or something and get four times as much for the same money.'

"With which observation he grabs the big pitcher on the washstand, empties the water in it, rinses it out and starts for the nearest liquid refreshment dispensary. Ten minutes later he came back with the most disgusted expression on his face I had ever seen there.

"'What's the matter,' I asked, in alarm. 'Didn't lose the dime, did you?'

"'No, I didn't lose the dime,' he almost snarled, 'but, say, what do you suppose that infernal saloon keeper did?'

"I refused to guess.

"'Well,' continued Jim, 'when I set the pitcher upon the bar, laid down my ten cents and told him I wanted that much worth of beer he swept the coin into the cash drawer, grabbed a glass, filled it with beer from the tap, emptied it in the pitcher, filled it again, emptied it again in the pitcher, shoved the latter toward me, said 'Thank you,' and turned to wait on some one else. Say, I was so dazed that I couldn't say a word and just picked up the pitcher and walked out. See if you can see any beer in it.'

"I did manage to find what appeared to be two spoonfuls of a brownish liquid in the bottom of the big pitcher, which Jim and I proceeded sorrowfully to drink. Then we went to bed and dreamed of hunting for smart Aleck saloon keepers with clubs. Tough, don't you think?"

STICK TO SIMPLE FOOD.

The American Business Man's Pace Demands Only Easily Digested Dishes.

There was in the old days far less wear and tear upon the nerves; and, under such conditions, digestion was more completely performed, writes Mrs. S. T. Rorer, of "Why I Oppose Pies," in Ladies' Home Journal. The mothers of to-day must look more carefully to the building of their bodies and brains than their mothers and grandmothers did. Indeed, at the pace at which we Americans are going we use our brains at full speed nearly all the time. What man can build brain and brawn on pies, layer cake or preserves, or any other mass of material which from its very complexity requires labor and time for digestion, drawing the blood from the brain to the stomach during his working hours? Observe those who eat their complex foods carelessly and hastily, and you will see at a glance the conditions that necessitate a complete rest every now and then, or an early nervous breakdown.

In my close observation in the last 20 years I find very few people in our common struggle for existence who can for any length of time eat carelessly of complex foods. At 40 or 50 a man may perhaps have accumulated wealth, but not health; and of what erthly use is the first without the second? Many persons in the generation gone before have eaten pies at least once a day, but they have not had meat three times a day, nor have they rushed at our pace. They gave more time to the digestion of the pie. People who recommend these rich foods rarely know anything of their complex conditions, and still less of the complexity of digestion.

The Bane of American Homes.

A physician writing in Woman's Home Companion speaks in strong terms against two pernicious habits sapping the strength of the nation, claiming that "Hurry becomes a habit; so does worry. It is as impossible to throw off one as the other. The man who has been in a hurry all his life is no greater victim to the habit formed in youth than the woman who continually worries. Every phase of existence can be turned into some excuse for worry. When worry gets the upper hand housekeeping is an irksome task, and it is sure to poison the whole atmosphere of the home. Children brought up in such a home imbibe it just as naturally as they do other characteristics of their parents, and they grow up in the belief that the world would not progress if they did not give their daily modicum of worry to help it along. Those who do not worry are looked upon as idle and slothful, and yet they often accomplish more than the crowd of habitual worriers."

Delicious Dish of Peaches.

Cut six peaches in half, stone and sprinkle sugar in the hollows; rub a large tablespoonful of butter into a pint of flour, sifted with a teaspoonful of baking powder and half a teaspoonful of salt; beat an egg very light, stir it into a scant cupful of milk and mix gradually with the prepared flour, beating well at the last; pour into a greased baking pan large enough to allow the fruit to be spread out and the batter to be about an inch thick, and bake for half an hour in a brisk oven. Serve with cream and sugar.—Household Magazine.

HIS BUBBLE PRICKED

Michigan Youth Not Provided For by Miss Helen Gould.

Goes to New York Expecting to Be Cared For by the Rich Philanthropist and Returns Home a Sadder and a Wiser Boy.

Miss Helen Gould denies a story told by William Jackson, of Phoenix, Mich., that she invited him to come to New York city under her patronage. In fact, Miss Gould has a very misty recollection of the event which the boy describes in highly colored words.

"Miss Gould has heard of this story," said the caretaker at Miss Gould's Irvington house. "She left word that if anyone called and asked about this young man Jackson to say that she remembered a boy in Michigan who held her horses and refused to accept a tip. She, however, says it is not true that she invited the boy to come east, nor did she promise to educate him or do anything else for him."

Jackson has returned to his home at Phoenix, Mich., a sadder but a wiser boy than when he left there a few weeks ago. Jackson told Mrs. George Robert Sullivan that upon his arrival in New York city he went at once to Miss Gould's residence. Instead of being received as he had expected, he was met by a butler, who turned him from the door before he could get word to Miss Gould. Jackson, sick at heart and discouraged, was directed to the Soldiers' Relief association, where he told his tale of woe to Mrs. Sullivan. To her he said Miss Gould told him if he ever came east to call upon her and she would give him a start in life. Jackson said he had induced his father to give him $60, with which he had come to New York city.

Mrs. Sullivan placed the young man in the rooms of the Young Men's Christian association until a few days ago, when she got transportation for him to his home and sent him back. He probably will don overalls again and stick to farming.

ORE AVERAGING HIGH.

Marvelously Rich Gold Discovery in Montana by Two Michigan Men.

It now seems probable that the ledge from which originated the world's richest half-acre of placer ground—Montana bar, near Helena—and from which six men in one placer season panned out $41,000,500 in gold dust, has, after many years' search, been discovered. Christopher Miller and son, formerly of Champion, Mich., who have been operating a claim in Confederate gulch, has just received the returns from a shipment of ore which averaged nearly $1,000 a ton in gold, by far the richest ore encountered in Montana for many years.

The ore comes from narrow seams, frequently only a quarter of an inch in width, which cuts through the rock in true fissure veins. Some of these seams are so rich that they are almost solid gold. The little quartz that is in the vein is bound together with strips and nuggets of gold worth $16.50 an ounce. They follow these seams, take out the rich ore, crush it in a mortar to the size of peas, pan out the free gold and ship the tailings to the smelter. They show very rich specimens. Mr. Miller, Jr., had a pin made of a nugget worth $29. The "nuggets" which they get by panning run from a few cents to as high as $29. The seams are continuous for at least 500 feet so far as developed. They are down to a depth in one place of 35 and in several places of 20 and 25 feet.

THE MARKETS.

Cincinnati, Aug. 18.			
CATTLE—Common ..	$3 25	@	4 25
Select butchers	5 15	@	5 25
CALVES—Extras		@	7 25
HOGS—Select packers	5 20	@	5 25
Mixed packers.....	5 10	@	5 20
SHEEP—Choice	3 75	@	4 00
LAMBS—Extras	5 85	@	6 00
FLOUR—Spring pat..	4 00	@	4 50
WHEAT—No. 2 red..		@	76
CORN—No. 2 mixed..		@	42
OATS—No. 2 mixed..		@	22½
RYE—No. 2		@	52½
HAY—Ch. timothy ..		@13	75
PORK—Mess		@11	60
LARD—Steam		@ 6	45
BUTTER—Ch. dairy..		@	14
Choice creamery ...		@	22
APPLES—Ch. to fancy	1 75	@	2 00
POTATOES—Per brl .	90	@	1 10
TOBACCO—New	3 00	@	9 95
Old	10 00	@17	50
CHICAGO.			
FLOUR—Win. patent.	3 80	@	3 90
WHEAT—No. 2 red..	73⅝	@	74½
No. 3 spring	72¼	@	73
CORN—No. 2		@	38¾
OATS—No. 2		@	22
RYE—		@	51½
PORK—Mess	11 00	@11	05
LARD—Steam	6 60	@ 6	62½
NEW YORK.			
FLOUR—Win. patent.	3 75	@	4 00
WHEAT—No. 2 red..		@	78⅝
CORN—No. 2 mixed..		@	45⅛
OATS—No. 2 mixed..		@	26
RYE—		@	57¼
PORK—Mess	12 25	@13	25
LARD—Steam		@ 6	92½
BALTIMORE.			
WHEAT—No. 2 red..	68½	@	68¾
Southern	70	@	72
CORN—No. 2 mixed..	42	@	42⅛
OATS—No. 2 mixed..	24	@	24½
CATTLE—First qual..	5 00	@ 5	50
HOGS—Western	6 00	@ 6	10
INDIANAPOLIS.			
WHEAT—No. 2 red..		@	73
CORN—No. 2 mixed..		@	40¾
OATS—No. 2 mixed..		@	22½
LOUISVILLE.			
FLOUR—Win. patent.	4 00	@ 4	50
WHEAT—No. 2 red..		@	71
CORN—Mixed		@	42½
OATS—Mixed	22½	@	23
PORK—Mess		@12	50
LARD—Steam		@ 6	75